DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 298 204 UD 026 337

AUTHOR Fuhrman, Susan
TITLE Increased State Capacity and Aid to the Disadvantaged.
PUB DATE Oct 87
NOTE 16p.; In: Policy Options for the Future of Compensatory Education; see UD 026 334.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Compensatory Education; *Educationally Disadvantaged; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Aid; Federal Programs; *Federal State Relationship; Fiscal Capacity; High Risk Students; Program Administration; *Program Development; *Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; *State Programs

ABSTRACT

This paper is divided into the following sections: (1) State Capacity and Education, with regard to financial resources and policymaking ability; (2) State Education Reforms; (3) States and the Disadvantaged: A Historical Perspective; (4) Education Reform and At-Risk Youth; and (5) Recent Trends in Programs for the Disadvantaged. The capacity and willingness of states to provide for public education have increased markedly in recent years. State government has modernized and matured; the wide-ranging programmatic and fiscal reforms enacted since the early 1980s dramatically demonstrate state interest in education, and state legislators and governors made policy in a number of areas that had been largely delegated to local school districts. States also took policy initiatives, such as their creation of remedial programs that moved state disadvantaged programs away from the Federal model and integrated them with the state general program. The fact that the new programs for disadvantaged children were coupled with general school improvement initiatives, supported by top state leadership, and developed out of state needs rather than in response to a Federal stimulus indicates a new, stronger level of state commitment than in the past. The proposed second generation of reforms may bring even more substantial benefits to at-risk children. A list of references is provided. (BJV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED298204

INCREASED STATE CAPACITY AND AID TO THE DISADVANTAGED

by

Susan Fuhrman
Rutgers University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Alan A. Richmond
Research & Evaluation Associates, Inc.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

UD026337

INCREASED STATE CAPACITY AND AID TO THE DISADVANTAGED

The capacity and willingness of states to provide for public education have increased markedly in recent years. State government has modernized and matured; the wide-ranging programmatic and fiscal reforms enacted since the early 1980s dramatically demonstrate state interest in education. However, an important question is the extent to which this expanded state activity will benefit the educationally disadvantaged. Historically, the states have not served this constituency particularly well, defining such service as part of the Federal government's role. There are also troublesome concerns about the effects of recent reforms on at-risk youngsters. On the other hand, elements of the new reform movement bring significantly expanded services for the low achievers, and it is likely that future developments may benefit them as well. On balance, the recent reforms and proposals next on the state agenda may cause the scales to tip in favor of children with special educational needs for the first time in recent state history.

State Capacity and Education

Over the 20 to 25 year period prior to the recent state reform movement, states vastly modernized and improved their capacity to take the lead in educational policymaking. Once called the "fallen arches" of the Federal system, states were broadly criticized for their unrepresentative, antiquated governance systems. They had outdated constitutions, weak governors, and malapportioned and cumbersome legislatures. Their tax systems were regressive and inadequate. All that has changed. With revised constitutions, modified revenue bases, gubernatorial offices strengthened by longer terms and improved veto power, and professionalized legislatures, states have become capable of domestic policy leadership.

States now have the improved fiscal capacity necessary to support an expanded policy role. State revenues have consistently grown as a percent of total public sector receipts since the late 1960s, in contrast to both Federal and local revenues. State aid to local government has quadrupled since 1969. The growth was made possible by a steady strengthening and diversification of state tax systems; between 1959 and 1977, 13 states adopted an income tax and 12 states adopted a sales tax. In the same period, states developed several fiscal discipline measures to assist with budget management: "rainy day funds," statutory or constitutional expenditure limitations and gubernatorial line item veto (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1984).

At the same time states were strengthening their fiscal bases, they were improving the institutions of governance. Governors' offices have become considerably more capable of policy initiation. Since the 1960s state planning and development offices have been created as staff for the governors in all but five states. While the

average staff size of the governor's office was 4 in 1956, by 1979 the average staff size was 34 (Sabato, 1983). In medium and larger states the staff tend to be specialized by policy area; it is not unusual to find 3 to 4 staffers working on education policy. In addition, executive branches have been reorganized, and the majority of states have created a cabinet system, with the cabinet serving as the problem-solving group for the governor (Doyle & Hartle 1985).

Nowhere has the change in composition and functioning been more dramatic than in the case of the state legislature. Legislatures not only became more representative as a consequence of reapportionment, they became increasingly professional as well. Legislators began to spend much more time at their jobs, extending session time and working during the interim in addition. As requirements for financial disclosure became stricter and as legislative duties began to take up more and more time, fewer citizen legislators--lawyers, in particular--ran for office and more full-time politicians took their place. Professional politicians are politically ambitious; they see legislative service as advancing future political careers, and, consequently, value responsiveness to constituents above all else. They have improved the physical setting in which they spend so much time serving their constituents, providing offices and sophisticated electronic equipment for themselves. They have also vastly augmented their staffs. The great growth in legislative staffs was during the late 1960s and early 1970s. It has been estimated that professional staffing increased 30 percent between 1968 and 1974 (Rosenthal, 1981). In the last few years, the total number of staff has been relatively stable. However, the staff is becoming increasingly fragmented, with fewer staff placed in central research agencies or committees and more staff going to individual legislators for constituent service.

The improved information flow about local conditions, the incentives and capacity to respond to constituent demand, and the long-term political ambitions that lie at the heart of the improvements in capacity all make for a more aggressive legislature. Today's legislatures are flexing their muscles, they believe themselves capable of leadership and are exerting it wherever they can. They are seizing a leadership role in more and more areas, particularly in the case of policy issues where political costs are small. It is not likely they will lead in establishing a position on abortion or in cutting budgets, but they will take the lead on drug education and economic development, where there is widespread support for action.

The muscle-flexing and credit-claiming posture has undoubtedly contributed to the extensive educational policymaking activities of state legislatures. Education is, after all, the largest single item in state budgets. Legislative interest in education grew throughout the 1970s in tandem with the growth in legislative strength. School finance was the education issue that legislators had always cared about the most, because of their budgetary responsibility. As activist courts and sophisticated issue networks pushed school finance reform into prominence as the education issue of the seventies, the assumption of a leadership role by legislatures was

accelerated. By the end of the decade, legislators were the predominant education policymakers in many states (Rosenthal & Fuhrman, 1981).

By the start of the 1980s, legislatures and modernized governors' offices were poised for an expansion into more programmatic education concerns. State aid to education had doubled in the course of school finance reform. The infusion of so much new money created the demand for enhanced accountability controls. Policymakers were searching for ways to improve productivity as well. They were already noting public concern about declining test scores and warnings about shortages of qualified teachers. State leaders were turning their scrutiny to curriculum issues and teacher quality when A Nation at Risk and other reform reports came along to lend momentum to their efforts.

State Education Reforms

Between 1982 and 1986 states enacted a set of education reforms that are extraordinary in scope and nature. In that period, virtually every state addressed at least three of the following substantive areas of education reform:

- teacher certification and training--including scholarship and loan programs, entrance and exit testing, and teacher education requirements;
- teacher compensation and career structure--including minimum or across the board salary increases, career ladder plans, and other incentive programs;
- governance and finance--including formula revisions and changes in governance structures at the state, local, or intermediate levels;
- school attendance, calendar, and class size--including revisions in the compulsory school age and in attendance policy, longer instructional days and years, and special early education programs;
- graduation standards--including new course requirements and exit-testing policies; and
- curriculum and testing--including more widespread assessments, promotional gates, and model curricula.

To pay for these initiatives, states increased real revenues devoted to education by $2 billion during the 1982-83 school year; $0.9 billion in 1983-84; $3.5 billion in 1984-85; and $3 billion in 1985-86. The state share of education spending rose from 48.9 percent at the start of the decade to 50.1 percent in 1986 (Dougherty, 1986).

Several aspects of the reform movement make it quite unique and remarkable. First, with many of the reforms, state government entered into areas of schooling previously left to the education establishment and to locals. Legislators and governors made unprecedented decisions about what shall be taught, in what manner, by whom and at what level of compensation. For example, even in states where the local bargaining process still determines salary scales, legislatures have provided aid for new minimum salaries and incentives for the development of differentiated pay scales.

Second, the reforms spread through the states with unprecedented rapidity. Historically, policies without specific Federal incentives or sanctions have taken as long as 4 years to reach half the states. School finance reform reached half the states within six years, but many elements of the recent reform movement, such as the increase in graduation requirements, spread at nearly twice that rate.

Third, a number of states--including Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee--enacted reform packages that were much more comprehensive than any previous state education laws. Several of the new reforms included 100 discrete changes. The 1985 Georgia reform, the Quality Basic Education Act (QBE), incorporated a major rehaul of school finance, extensive new testing programs, an information management system, incentives for district reorganization, training for administrators and school boards, and a teacher career ladder, to name just some of its elements. The comprehensive approach to educational change is a noted departure from the much more incremental tack generally taken. Even legislatures noted for their activity in education have tended to address one or two important educational issues each year or session, rather than parcelling so many together at once.

Why were such far-reaching, comprehensive reforms enacted with such speed at that particular moment in history? The perceived decline in educational quality was not the immediate impetus; conditions had in fact bottomed out. The decline in student achievement that began in the late sixties was already reversing by the time of the reforms (Peterson, 1983). Certainly among the explanations was the fact that states were recovering from the recession and by 1983 experienced more fiscal flexibility. Also important was the fact that there was virtually no opposition to the school reform movement. The business community, the foremost opponent to increased education taxing and spending in the past, was now among reform's most active supporters because it recognized the link between education and a healthy economy. Educational interest groups, which opposed many of the reforms because they threatened local autonomy or appeared to define local educators as part of the problem, were neutralized in their opposition because they also realized that this was the first opportunity in a long time to gain major funding increases for education. The public pressure for reform, indicated by intensifying criticism of the public schools and a simultaneous willingness to support increased taxes if they led to improvement, provided another incentive. The national reform reports set out a reform agenda and

garnered so much press coverage that educational reform could hardly be avoided (McDonnell & Fuhrman, 1986).

It is the juxtaposition of these factors--fiscal slack, weak opposition, mounting public demand, pressure by business elites, and the presence of a reform agenda--with the ever-growing search for leadership on the part of increasingly aggressive legislators and governors that accounts for the nature and extent of the reform movement. The importance of legislators and governors in shaping and promoting reform is critical to an understanding of the reform movement. Even more significantly in this context, the implications of the reform movement for disadvantaged youth hinge on the support for special needs from legislators and governors. In the past, there was reason to question that commitment.

States and the Disadvantaged: A Historical Perspective

Traditionally, states have not taken a strong role in supporting programs for the disadvantaged. A survey of states in 1979-80 found that 23 states provided funding for compensatory education (Winslow & Peterson, 1981). Many states had funding formulas similar or identical to Title I and included requirements and restrictions to assure the expenditure of funds on the supplementary instructional programs for the appropriate students. In fact, the majority of the state programs appear to have been deliberately patterned on Title I and reflect state response to a Federal initiative, rather than state leadership (McQuire, 1982).

Perhaps the Federal stimulus explains why state commitment to disadvantaged programs has never been very strong. Total funding for these programs never exceeded one percent of total state funding for education. In some cases the presence of state compensatory aid did not necessarily mean that disadvantaged children were actually receiving program services. Some programs were established merely as political side payments to urban interests to gain their support of other state goals and were never intended to subsidize special programs. In other cases, the state intended districts to provide programs but was hampered in providing direction by low state agency capacity or traditional deference to local control (McDonnell & McLaughlin, 1982a). Only those programs most tied to Title I were likely to receive substantial state supervision (Milne & Moskowitz, 1983).

Furthermore, when budgets were tight, compensatory programs were often among the first to suffer. In the early 1980s, fiscally hard-pressed states yielded to pressures for maintenance of general aid support at the expense of special need programs (Wolf, 1981). For example, in 1981-82, Minnesota made a 6.5 percent cut in general education support funds, but a 9 percent cut in categorical programs. In the same year Utah cut compensatory and bilingual aid by 30 percent and increased support for the general program by 10 percent (Milne & Moskowitz, 1983).

State compensatory programs also changed over time to be less compensatory, in the sense of making up for poverty-related educational deficits, and more remedial. Although most programs were initially created in the image of Title I, in some states achievement was always a sole criterion for selecting both eligible schools and students. New York's compensatory program, for example, targeted funds at low achievers not served with Title I funds. Over time, more states moved to an achievement focus, and away from an income definition of disadvantage. For example, in 1982, Connecticut determined to abolish its income-based program and to shift the funding to a remediation program. State leaders proclaimed support for achievement-based remediation rather than surrogate action through funding of low-income children. The metamorphosis toward a focus on basic skills remediation indicates that compensatory programs increasingly became differentiated to reflect state goals, rather than Federal goals (Milne & Moskowitz, 1983; Winslow & Peterson, 1982).

Analysts posit that weak political support accounts for the rather discouraging state commitment to the disadvantaged. Proponents of compensatory services have never organized very effectively at the state level, in comparison to the Federal level. Legislatures and governors are responsive to the larger constituency; to the extent that education is a political issue, they win or lose elections based on the success of the general program, not on support for specialized programs. They are likely to subordinate special needs programs to more general educational goals (McDonnell & McLaughlin, 1982b). A study of state special need programs in six states showed that governors indicated a propensity to fold special need programs in with the more general education program, for example, by consolidating a set of categorical programs into block grants and letting local districts sort out service priorities (Milne & Moskowitz, 1983).

The low priority accorded to disadvantaged programs in the past by legislators and governors offers reason to doubt that the current reform movement they fashioned provides an improved outlook. In fact, it is feared that the emphasis on excellence will divert attention from equity goals and further disadvantage low-achieving students.

Education Reform and the At-Risk Youth

Many concerned educators are convinced that the reform movement does not augur well for educationally disadvantaged youth. They worry about the impact of graduation tests on marginal students. Those who are substantially behind at high school entry will not have time to close two- and three-year learning gaps and will fail or drop out rather than attempt what seems like an impossible task. Critics also question the imposition of additional course requirements for graduation when low-achieving students are barely making it through

existing course loads. New requirements for advanced math and science classes can fill up the school day, leaving no time for remediation or career preparation. Concern also focuses on efforts to extend the school day or year without corresponding attention to the quality of learning opportunities for all students during existing school hours. Finally, a number of critics doubt that all students will have equal access to recent improvements. For example, new academic courses taught to disadvantaged students, particularly those in poor or isolated schools that have difficulty attracting high quality teachers, may be watered down or taught by teachers without the appropriate training. The trend toward the development of career ladders for teachers may not mean the same for all students. Master teachers may be concentrated in elite schools or districts unless career ladder programs have explicit provisions to assure distributional equity (Levin, 1985; Brown & Haycock, 1984).

It is too early to tell whether the dire predictions about the deleterious effects of reform will be borne out in practice. It is true that the failure rate on new competency tests has been much higher in urban areas and among minority students. For example, 35 percent of urban students failed the reading portion of the 1986 High School Proficiency Test in New Jersey, as compared to 10 percent of students in non-urban districts. There was an even larger difference in the passage rates on the mathematics portion of the test. Even though there has been considerable improvement in the passage rates of urban school children over the three years the test has been administered, the gap between urban and non-urban performance is substantial and disturbing.

However, there is another side to the argument about the impact of reform. New standards may not result in further disadvantage. After all, the concept of standards is based on sound educational philosophy. High standards represent high expectations which in turn are strongly associated with effective schooling. High standards can also be supported by research on the "opportunity to learn." Students learn more when exposed to more content. In addition, there is some evidence to show that increasing standards may benefit all students, disadvantaged and more advantaged. Preliminary data from the High School and Beyond Study suggest that even students with low prior achievement may learn more from more academic courses (Clune, 1985).

Some evidence exists to indicate that the recent reforms--or at least the climate and public attention surrounding the reforms, which are still in their infancy--benefit lower achieving students. A recent study of course enrollment patterns in 20 California high schools conducted by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) shows that schools with children of lower socioeconomic status (SES) experienced sizeable increases in academic course offerings between 1982-83 and 1984-85. Schools below the mean in SES had a 32 percent increase in the number of science sections while schools above the mean had only an 8 percent increase (Grossman, Kirst, Negash, & Schmidt-Posner, 1986). In the same state, most data sources suggest test score improvement in inner-city schools and no evidence of

increased dropping out (Haycock, 1986). Early reports from South Carolina indicate that low-achieving students made substantial progress since the enactment of comprehensive reform in 1983. For example, the percentage of fourth grade students scoring in the lower quartile on basic skills tests declined by 12 percent between 1983 and 1985 (Peterson & Strassler, 1986).

The impact of the reforms on the disadvantaged remains an empirical issue, particularly as new higher standards have yet to be fully implemented. State oversight efforts should track the differential effects of course requirements, testing and curricular changes over time. The questions of access to improvements and the impact of reform on marginal students are among the most important any assessment of reform must answer. However, the reforms' effects depend not only on how new standards or teacher policies work out in practice but also on the success of a number of new programs specifically addressed at low-achieving youth. In many states, the reform movement incorporated special initiatives for at-risk youngsters along with higher standards and other general program improvements.

Recent Trends in Programs for the Disadvantaged

The recent state reforms employ a number of approaches to programming for at-risk youth. First, there have been modest increases in spending on existing state compensatory programs. States such as New Jersey and New York, which have long had compensatory education programs, increased funding for those efforts. Second, states that never had compensatory programs, developed significant new services.

South Carolina is a case in point. The state that now has the highest per capita funded compensatory and remedial basic skills program in the country had no state disadvantaged program before its reform legislation in 1983. At that time it established a $55 million remediation and compensatory basic skills program in reading and math in elementary schools and in those two subjects plus writing in secondary schools. Compensatory services are guaranteed to children scoring below the 25th percentile; approximately 117,000 children are served through this program which requires daily services, is fairly tightly regulated and is closely tied to Chapter 1. In most grades, those students who score above the bottom quartile but still need help are provided remedial services.

Remedial services are more flexible; districts may chose from a number of different models, including directed teaching, computer-assisted instruction, independent study and tutoring. If appropriate score gains are not shown within two years, a district is required to redesign its model. The program is proving to be a major success with achievement gains of two to three times above the expected outcomes.

Pennsylvania also has a new remediation effort as part of its Testing for Essential Learning and Literacy Skills (TELLS) program.

TELLS was established in 1984 as part of Governor Richard Thornburgh's "Turning the Tide" reform agenda. TELLS tests measure reading and math skills in third, fifth and eighth grades. Thirty-eight million dollars are provided for remedial programs for those scoring below the cutoff level; the major portion of the funding is a direct categorical program that flows directly to the low-achieving child's district. Almost 30 percent of the states' children were targeted for remedial aid through the 1986 round of tests. About half of those needed help in both reading and math.

Georgia is an example of a state that offered compensatory education before its 1985 reform, but expanded and revised its programming concurrently with changes in the general education program. The previous compensatory program served children in grades one through eight who failed to achieve 15 of 20 objectives on the fourth grade reading portion of the state criterion-referenced test. However, according to the Governor's commission that developed the 1985 comprehensive reform package, the program lacked standard eligibility criteria, focus and coordination. Quality Basic Education includes a new remedial program that serves students in more grade levels and is supported by the revised general aid formula. Eligible pupils--those in grades 2 to 5 who score a half year or more below grade level on a state-approved standardized test or below the 25th percentile on a norm-referenced test in reading or math; ninth graders who achieve at one or more years below grade level in reading or in math on a standardized test and those in grades 10 through 12 who fail the state basic skills test--are weighted in the determination of formula aid. Local districts design programs that are subject to state board monitoring and evaluation.

Another new approach states are taking to services for the educationally disadvantaged is the provision of targeted early childhood programs. Encouraged by research on the long-term positive effects of high-quality pre-school programs for at-risk youth (Schweinhart, Berrueta-Clement, Barnett, Epstein, & Weikart, 1985), several states have established or expanded early childhood services. For example, in 1985 Illinois adopted a pre-school program targeted to at-risk three- to five-year-olds. It serves 7,400 children in 234 districts and permits nonprofit agencies as well as school districts to provide the services. Louisiana, Michigan, Texas and Washington state also have pre-school programs that target the at-risk or disadvantaged. For example, Washington uses Head Start eligibility as a criterion for its program for four-year-olds and supplies funds to both Head Start agencies or schools, with priority given to districts with the most at-risk children. Massachusetts, Maine and Rhode Island have expanded Head Start programming with their own revenues (Grubb, in press).

South Carolina's reforms included early childhood programs as well. A half-day state-funded program for at-risk four-year-olds will eventually be supported at a level of 10 million dollars a year. Eligible children, deemed not ready to start school, are identified through a referral system with the cooperation of various state and local agencies. The schools screen the children who are placed in

child development centers with very small pupil-teacher ratios. By 1988-89, the state intends that its program and Head Start together will serve all at-risk four-year-olds, an estimated 25 to 30 percent of the four-year-old population.

A second component of South Carolina's approach to early childhood education is mandatory attendance in kindergarten. After discovering that first grade children who had not attended kindergarten were significantly behind their peers (32 percent of low-income children without kindergarten were likely to repeat first grade as compared to 12 percent of low-income children with kindergarten), the state determined to lower the compulsory school age by requiring kindergarten and supporting it with state funding. South Carolina is one of three states with mandatory kindergarten attendance (McDonald, 19896).

Finally, there are a growing number of programs aimed at specific problems strongly associated with educational disadvantage, e.g., teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and truancy. The most extensive developments are in the area of dropout prevention programs. The Education Commission of the States estimates that up to fifteen states have recently initiated dropout programs; a number of others are planning such efforts. The programs vary considerably, but state activity is characterized by better recordkeeping on dropout statistics, support of local programs and dissemination of promising practices, and efforts to encourage cross-agency cooperation. California's program, which has a goal of reducing the high school dropout rate 25 percent by 1990, includes support of special counseling services and a media campaign to encourage potential dropouts to stay in school. Wisconsin's new "Children At Risk" law mandates that districts develop plans for meeting the employment, education, personal and health needs of at-risk children, defined as teen parents, dropouts, truants, and those in trouble with the law. Washington state supports educational clinics that diagnose a child's needs and produce an individualized program for each potential dropout (McDonald, 1986).

These efforts--new or expanded remedial program; early childhood programs for at-risk students and dropout programs--represent an impressive array of state action. They indicate a commitment to those who are not likely to benefit from the general educational reform movement without additional help. In South Carolina, the compensatory/remedial and early childhood programs were explicitly coupled to the other "excellence reforms" that included promotion standards and exit testing. The Governors' office, which was instrumental in developing the reform package, and other leading actors recognized that it would be unfair to raise standards without giving everyone a fair shot to meet them. This point of view was clearly and broadly articulated. As a result, the ensuing reform package embodied an explicit trade between the business community that was strongly pushing exit testing and other performance standards and the educators and minority leaders who particularly supported programs for the disadvantaged.

The coupling of general program improvements and disadvantaged programs indicates that the highest levels of state leadership are speaking out for at-risk students at the same time they are making significant changes in the general program. The juncture bodes well for disadvantaged youth. Even though programs for at-risk students are relatively small in many states, their inclusion in larger reform packages and their acknowledged importance to the success of the state's overall educational efforts mean state leaders are including programs for the disadvantaged squarely within their scope of activities. Legislators, governors, and the business community that urged political leaders to pursue reform are defining at-risk youth as an important constituency for the receipt of state services, not as a marginal group that the Federal government will take care of, perhaps with some limited state add-on. Tying these programs to the general reforms in operation and in new legislation--remediation is triggered by new statewide tests introduced as part of the reform--further integrates them with the general program. The remedial programs emerging out of the reform continue the trend for state compensatory programs to move from imitations of Title I to achievement-driven programs that reflect state needs. The achievement emphasis integrates them with the regular program and thus makes them more likely to sustain general political support.

Integration of at-risk programs with the general reform offers encouragement for the long-term support of such programs by political leaders. Nonetheless, the many new at-risk programs are relatively small in funding, compared to the dollars going into other aspects of reform, and largely categorical in nature. It is also true that services for the disadvantaged, while tied to the larger reforms rhetorically, were arrived at somewhat late in the reform process. A survey of state excellence commissions in 1984 found only 14 percent addressing dropout prevention. The concern for dropouts has come more recently, in some states only after critics pointed out the potentially damaging effects of reform on marginal students.

The small, categorical programs for at-risk youth are not likely to satisfy the critics who worry about the impact of new standards, tests and course requirements. They would argue that side programs are too little, too late; that remedial programs that are not well integrated into the entire school day have little promise of really making a difference for at-risk children; and that what is needed is an early and continuous effort to make the entire school experience effective for all learners.

Making the entire school experience more effective is a key goal of a new set of reform proposals that encompass reform's "Second Wave." State leaders are now deliberating how to address the recommendations of several recent education reform reports. The reports of the Carnegie Forums on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching and The Holmes Group envision a vastly different school, a "restructured" school where teachers diagnose and respond to individual student needs, rigid ability tracking is a thing of the past, and the self-contained classroom is only one of many instructional models. In such a school, say the reports' authors, the teacher as a

revitalized professional can structure curriculum and instruction to the benefit of all types of learners.

The 1991 Report: A Time for Results released by the nation's governors, reiterates the call for a restructured learning environment; in addition, it includes other recommendations, such as encouraging choice among public schools, that could have important ramifications for students who are unsuccessful in traditional school settings. Included in the governors' list of priorities are early childhood programs and other programs for at-risk students. In fact, one of the seven task forces that contributed to the report concentrated on school readiness issues. The 1991 Report is remarkable in that it pledges the support of the highest state political leadership for educational improvement. Collectively the governors promise to stick with education reform for at least five years, to publicize their recommendations and to monitor and report on implementation by individual states.

The second wave of reform will be a long, slow, and expensive undertaking, one that will be very problematic in the many states experiencing fiscal distress. It will be characterized by difficult political negotiating, for example, balancing the demand for increased teacher leadership with the concerns of school principals. The vision of a restructured school has yet to take concrete shape. However, if the governors are true to their promise to keep working at education reform and if those reforms do revitalize schools, at-risk students certainly stand to benefit.

Summary

States have undoubtedly assumed the leadership role in education policy implied by their constitutional responsibility for education but never truly exercised before the 1980s. In the recent reform movement, state legislators and governors made policy in a number of areas that had been largely delegated to local school districts. States also stopped playing follow-the-leader to the Federal government, as exhibited by their creation of remedial programs that move state disadvantaged programs away from the Federal model and integrate them with the state general program. The fact that the new programs for disadvantaged children were coupled with general school improvement initiatives, supported by top state leadership, and developed out of state needs rather than in response to a Federal stimulus indicates a new, stronger level of state commitment than in the past. The proposed second generation of reforms may bring even more substantial benefits to at-risk children. In the interim, educators and citizens will be tracking the impact of the first wave of reforms, particularly those imposing higher standards on at-risk youth.

REFERENCES

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. (1984). Significant features of fiscal Federalism. Washington, DC: Author.

Brown, P. R., & Haycock, K. (1984). Excellence for whom? Oakland, CA: The Achievement Council.

Clune, W. H. (1985). New standards for high school students: Technical application. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, Center for Policy Research in Education.

Doughterty, V. (1986). (1986). Funding state education reforms. Denver, CO: The Education Commission of the States.

Doyle, D., & Hartle, T. (1985). Excellence in education: The states take charge. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Grossman, P., Kirst, M. W., Negash, W., & Schmidt-Posner, J. (1986). Curricular change in California comprehensive high schools. Berkeley, CA: Policy Analysis for California Education.

Grubb, N. W. (in press). Young children face the states: Issues and options for early childhood programs. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, Center for Policy Research in Education.

Haycock, K. (1986, April). The impact of reform on minorities. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Levin, H. M. (1985). The educationally disadvantaged: A national crisis. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

McDonald, J. G. (1986). Readiness for the educational standards. In Time for results: The governors' 1991 report on education. Washington, DC: The National Governors Association, Task Force on Readiness.

McDonnell, L. M., & Fuhrman, S. (1986). The political context of school reform. In V. Mueller & M. McKeown (Eds.), The fiscal, legal, and political aspects of state reform of elementary and secondary education. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Press.

McDonnell, L. M., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1982a). Education policy and the role of the states. Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation.

McDonnell, L. M., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1982b). The states' commitment to special need students. In J. Sherman, M. Kutner, & K. Small (Eds.), New dimensions on the Federal-state partnership in education. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

McQuire, K. (1982). State and Federal programs for special populations. Denver, CO: The Education Commission of the States.

Milne, A. M., & Moskowitz, J. (1983). Serving special needs children: The state approach. Washington, DC: Decision Resources.

Peterson, T. K., & Strassler, G. M. (1986, April). The impact of recent educational reforms on minority and all low achieving students and on minority and all high achieving students. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Peterson, P. E. (1983, Winter). Did the education commissions say anything? Brookings Review, 3-11.

Rosenthal, A. (1981). Legislative life. New York: Harper and Row.

Rosenthal, A., & Fuhrman, S. (1981). Legislative education leadership in the states. Washington, DC: The Institute for Educational Leadership.

Sabato, L. (1983). Goodbye to good-time Charlie (2nd ed.). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Schweinhart, L. J., Berrueta-Clements, J. R., Barnett, W. S., Epstein, A. S., & Weikart, D. P. (1985). The promise of early childhood education. Phi Delta Kappan, 66, 548-553.

Winslow, H. R., & Peterson, S. M. (1981). State initiatives for special needs populations. Palo Alto, CA: Bay Area Research Group.

Winslow, H. R., & Peterson, S. M. (1982). State initiatives for special needs students. In J. Sherman, M. Kutner, & K. Small (Eds.), New dimensions on the Federal-state partnership in education. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Wolf, A. (1981). State spending on education and levels of educational services. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.